

# Indiana House of Representatives

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## News and Information

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **VAN HAAFTEN BILL WILL INCREASE PUNISHMENT FOR VOYEURS**

INDIANAPOLIS -- House Bill 1099, legislation coauthored by State Rep. Trent Van Haaften (D-Mount Vernon) passed out of the House today by a vote of 92 - 0. The bill increases the penalty for voyeurism for repeat offenders, making it a Class D felony instead of a Class B misdemeanor.

This legislation was partly inspired by the experiences of Hannah Arbuckle, a resident of Indianapolis. In 2003, Robert Braun, a convicted rapist and voyeur, began peeping into Arbuckle's home. The police eventually began staking out Arbuckle's home, but were unable to catch Braun. One night, Arbuckle saw Braun standing on her front porch. She decided enough was enough. When Arbuckle confronted Braun, he ran to his truck and drove off. Arbuckle chased after him, jumped into the bed of his pickup truck and with her cell phone called the police. The police were able to locate the pickup truck and they arrested Braun.

While searching the pickup truck, the police found several items that led them to believe that if Braun had not been caught, he would have tried to sexually assault Arbuckle.

"Voyeurism in Indiana is not treated as severely as this crime warrants," said Van Haaften. "This is not just a prank. People who start out as voyeurs often escalate into committing more serious crimes. We need to stop them before they hurt someone."

A Class B misdemeanor conviction can result in 6 months jail time and a fine of \$1,000. But people convicted of voyeurism frequently do not face any jail time in Indiana. A Class D felony conviction is punishable by incarceration for 6 months to 3 years, depending upon mitigating circumstances.

"We need to ensure that the people of Indiana feel safe in their own homes. Increasing the penalty for repeat voyeurs is a step in that direction," said Van Haaften.

House Bill 1099 now moves to the Senate for further consideration.